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ABSTRACT

This guide presents a brief history of the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, their traditions, and their art. Focus is on painting, a traditional art form that continues to be practiced, and on ceremonies and beliefs that are important elements of contemporary Pueblo society. The guide is designed for students of ages 10 through 14, but can be adapted easily for students of other ages. A map shows Pueblo locations in the Southwest. Six color slides, depicting works by Pueblo Indian artists, are provided along with descriptions of each work, and questions for discussion. Biographies of 10 Pueblo Indian artists, including those represented by the color slides, are given. The guide also provides cultural definitions and a key to the symbols used, a glossary of words and phrases, a bibliography, and suggested activities. (NP)

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Pueblo Indian Watercolors

LEARNING BY LOOKING

A Study Guide

National Museum of American Art
Smithsonian Institution 1993

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THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

- A brief history of the Pueblo Indians, their traditions and art
- A map showing pueblo locations in the Southwest
- Descriptions of ten Pueblo artists and photographs of their works
- Cultural definitions and a key to symbols used
- A glossary of words and phrases
- A brief bibliography of research materials including audio-visuals, a discography, and works of fiction
- Suggested activities
- Six 35-mm color slides depicting works by Pueblo Indian artists, along with descriptions of each work and questions for discussion

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About this guide:

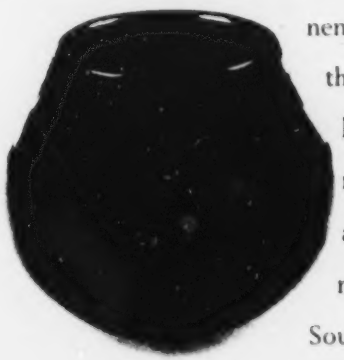
As its title suggests, this guide is about learning through looking to interpret images, to see how images represent meanings. All the examples used are from the Pueblo Indian watercolor collection of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. In the direct forms and clear colors of these artworks readers can see a wealth of ceremony and social customs that help in understanding Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, and also suggest ways to think about ceremonies like dances, weddings, birthdays, celebrations, and commemorations of all kinds. ❖ Many Pueblo Indian groups today live in the same communities they have occupied for hundreds of years. Many of the traditions of these people have been lost, however, many of them have been retained. This guide focuses on an art form that continues to be widely practiced today and ceremonies and beliefs that are important elements of contemporary Pueblo society. ❖ This guide is designed for ages ten through fourteen, but can easily be adapted for other ages. Its pages are designed for convenient photocopying.

GOALS:

1. To understand and appreciate the diversity of cultural traditions.
2. To develop skills in researching local, ethnic, and family traditions.
3. To introduce readers to the social customs, religion, and history of Pueblo peoples.

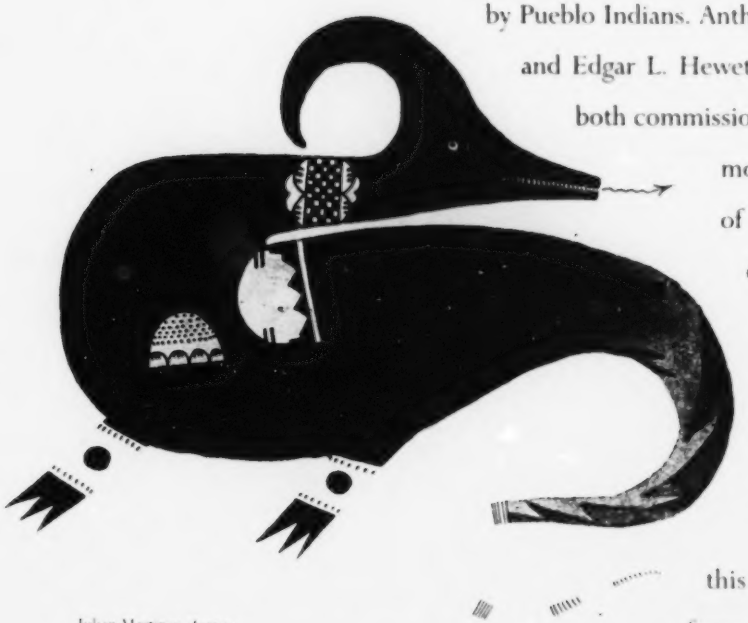
A Brief History of the Pueblo Indians

Pueblo is a Spanish term meaning "town" or "village." When Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado ventured into the Pueblo Indian region (now Arizona and New Mexico) in 1540, he called the Indians who lived in permanent towns "pueblo" Indians to differentiate them from their nomadic neighbors such as the Apache and Navajo. These groups today live in the same towns they have occupied for centuries, even predating the arrival of the Spanish. The map on page 6 shows the location of these pueblos, or towns. ❖ For more than a thousand years, Pueblo peoples in the Southwest of what is now the United States have painted decorative and symbolic patterns and designs. Until recently these painted motifs were used primarily as religious symbols on walls in ceremonial rooms called *kivas* or to decorate the highly refined pottery developed in the region. (See illustration below.) Within both of these traditions, the painting was done against a monochromatic, or unpainted background, and the forms were filled in with solid colors without shading. The artists mixed paints using mineral or plant pigments and applied them with a yucca leaf brush. ❖ In 1598, by command of Philip II of Spain, Juan de Oñate established the first permanent European settlement, and first political capital in the region near the Tewa-speaking pueblo of San Juan. Although the Spanish and later Mexican settlers and priests actively tried to replace the native religions of the Pueblo peoples with European Christianity, many ancient Pueblo religious beliefs exist to this day. ❖ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anglo (a term used in the Southwest to indicate people who are neither Indian or Hispanic)



Maria Martinez, *Blackware Pot*, ca. 1955, ceramic, approx. 6 x 3 in., Collection of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

anthropologists, artists, and enthusiasts discovered the rich cultural traditions of the Pueblo peoples and predicted that these cultures would soon be lost to the advancing European-based civilization. Anthropologists hoped to preserve a record of these traditions before they were lost. They recorded the language, documented in photographs the communities and people, and collected objects made by Pueblo Indians. Anthropologists Jesse Walter Fewkes of the Bureau of American Ethnology and Edgar L. Hewett of the School of American Research and Museum of New Mexico both commissioned Pueblo artists to paint images documenting their traditional ceremonies and activities. ❖ By 1915 artists of San Ildefonso Pueblo, one of many pueblos along the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, had developed a style of painting in watercolor on paper that focused on figures and geometric designs. (See illustration of *Avanyu* by Julian Martinez.) These artists were encouraged and influenced not only by scientists such as Fewkes and Hewett, but by art teachers such as Dorothy Dunn of the Federal Santa Fe Indian school, and non-Indian artists such as John Sloan of New York. By the early 1930s this new style, which eventually came to be considered a "traditional" form of Indian painting, was adopted by artists in neighboring pueblos in the Rio Grande valley. The movement, typified by bold color, balanced compositions, and figures painted without shading, perspective, or foreground and background, has continued to influence succeeding generations of Native painters. The first subjects for these paintings included ceremonial dances, activities of daily life, and adaptations of traditional pottery designs and decorative motifs. ❖ Before the arrival of Europeans, Pueblo peoples did not use paper and did not sell



Julian Martinez, *Avanyu*, ca. 1925, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper, 15 x 16 in.

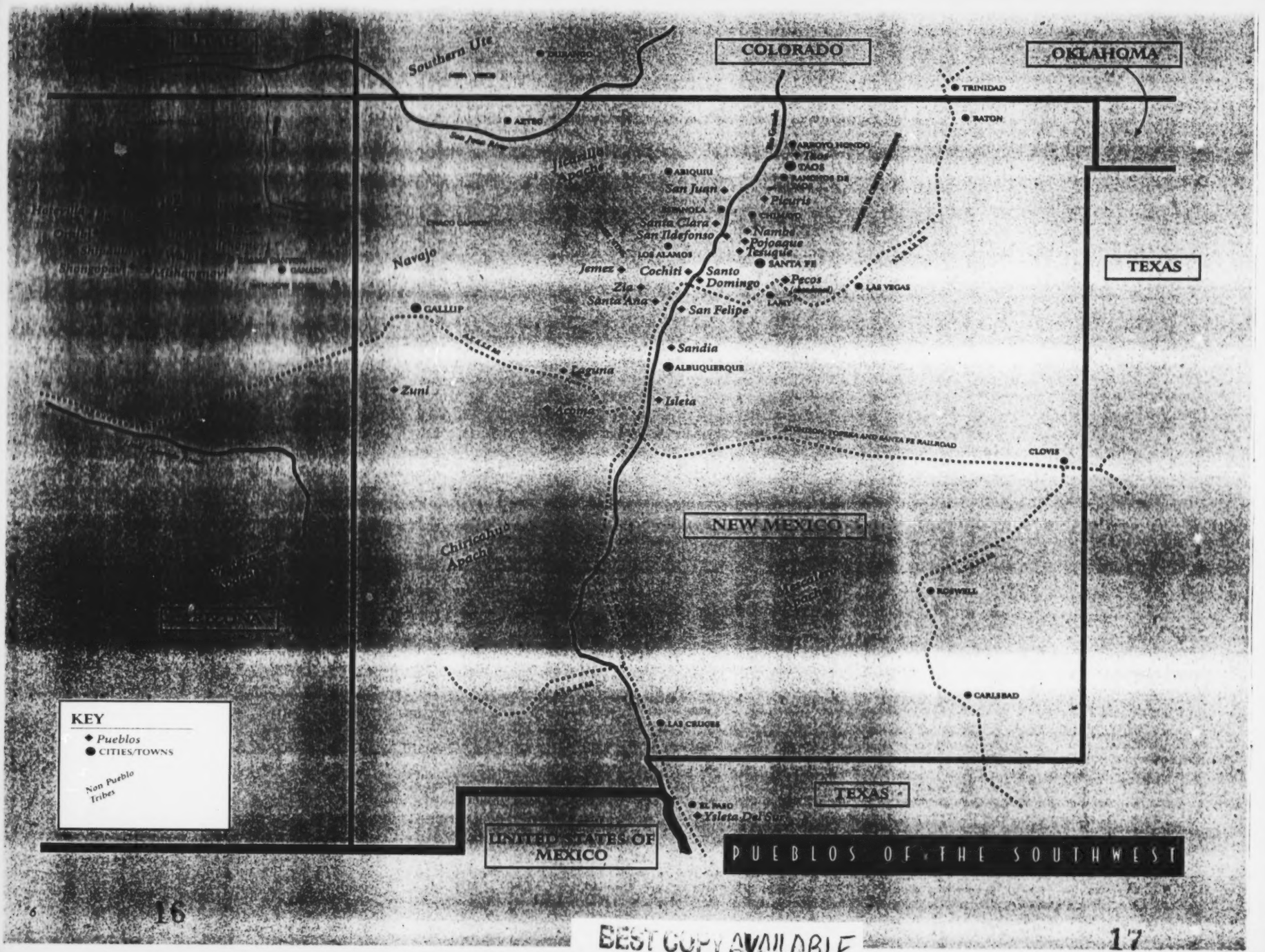
paintings. Although there are elements of the Pueblo Indian watercolor paintings that can be traced back to Pueblo culture before contact with Europeans, twentieth-century Pueblo paintings are the result of influences of both ancient local tradition, and Anglo aesthetic ideas and art marketing practices. Patrons who made suggestions and requests and bought paintings were essential in the development of the Pueblo Indian painting movement. Alice Corbin Henderson, a Chicago poet, began collecting watercolors by Pueblo Indians in 1917, soon after she and her husband, artist William Penhallow Henderson, moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Fascinated by the local cultures, the couple became strong advocates for the paintings of Pueblo artists. Beginning with the work of Crescencio Martinez and his nephew Awa Tsireh, both from San Ildefonso Pueblo, Henderson built her collection, supported the Indian artists through sales of these watercolors to friends and acquaintances during her travels, and sponsored an exhibition of the Pueblo watercolors in 1920 at the Chicago Arts Club. That same year in New York City, John Sloan and writer Mary Austin arranged exhibitions of Pueblo paintings at the Society of Independent Artists and the American Museum of Natural History. The paintings discussed in this guide were collected by Alice Corbin Henderson and were given to the National Museum of American Art by her daughter, Alice Henderson Rossin. ❖ All of the ceremonies and traditional ways of life depicted in these paintings continue today in the pueblos of the Southwest of the United States. Despite the fears of anthropologists and artists such as photographer Edward

Pueblo of San Ildefonso, ca. 1880.

Curtis, who called American Indians the "vanishing race," the Pueblo Indians have maintained their culture and continue to pass their traditions from one generation to the next.

Region, Language, Lifestyle

Pueblo peoples live in western and central New Mexico, eastern Arizona, and western Texas. (See map.) Contemporary Pueblo Indian villages are categorized by the six languages spoken by Pueblo peoples: Hopi, Zuni, Keresan, Tiwa, Towa, and Tewa. Each of the six cultural groups has distinct features and traditions. Common to all of the Pueblo groups is that historically the people were sedentary farmers who lived closely together in permanent towns. (See historic photograph of San Ildefonso Pueblo.) Hopi-speaking Pueblo Indians, a very distinct culture group, live in northeastern Arizona. ❖ Pueblo Indians have resided in this region for more than five hundred years. The ancestors of present day Pueblo peoples were the Anasazi who moved to the Rio Grande valley from areas to the north such as the Mesa Verde region. Pueblo people have traditionally made their living by farming, hunting, and trading. They developed and adapted farming and irrigation methods in the dry desert region to support crops of corn, beans, squash, and cotton for fabric. ❖ At the time of the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the mid-sixteenth century a strong culture existed. Pueblo life and culture changed dramatically after the arrival of Spanish and American settlers, but their society has adapted to many of these influences while retaining the core elements of their culture. Spanish settlers brought with them new crops and livestock such as sheep, goats, cattle, and horses. Spanish priests established missions throughout the Southwest and into California hoping to replace the native religions with Christianity. The intermingling of these religions can be seen today in dances and ceremonies, architecture, and visual arts.



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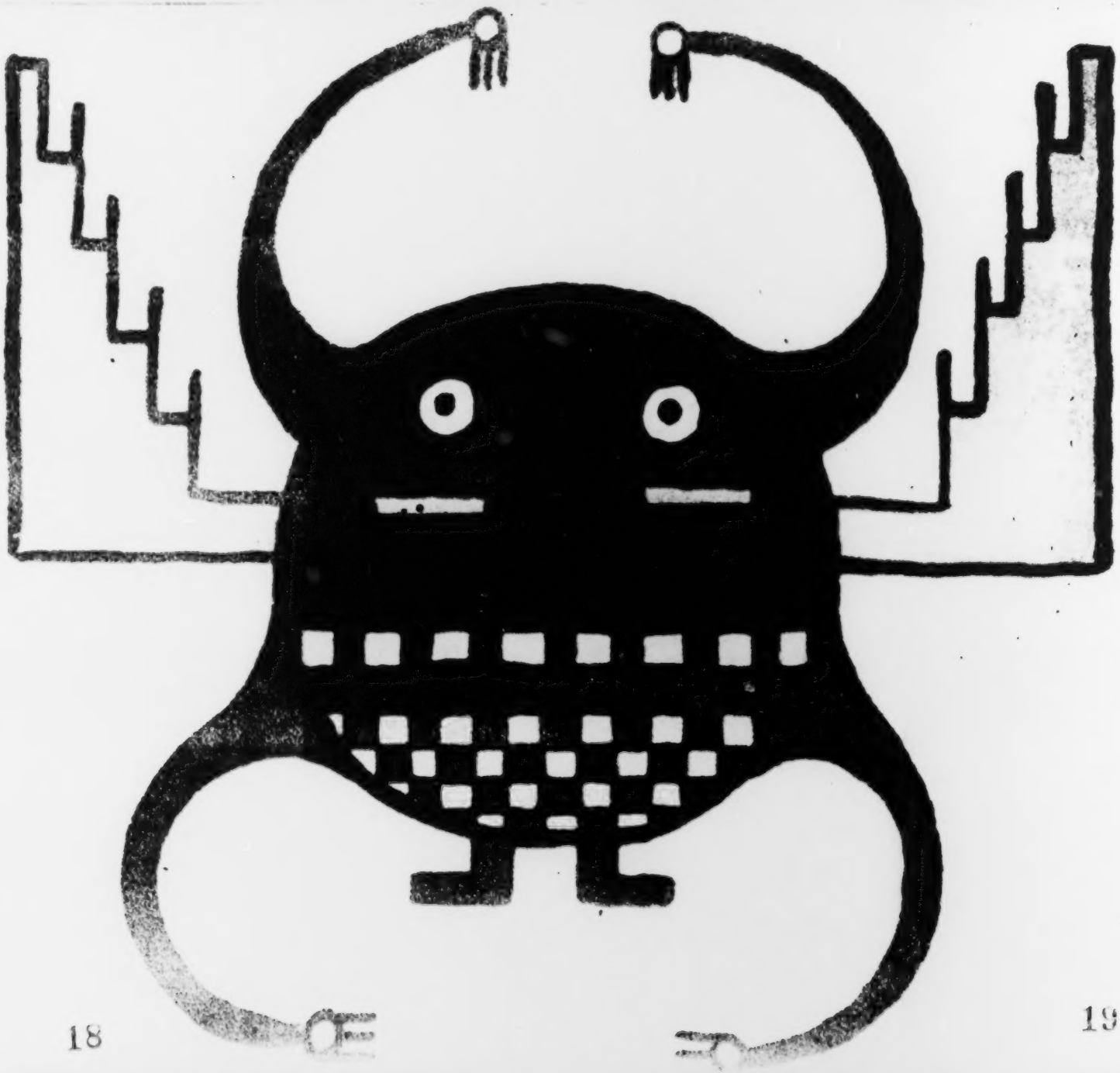


Awa Tsireh, *Animal Designs*, ca. 1917–20, watercolor on paper, 20 1/16 x 26 1/8 in.

Animal Designs

by Awa Tsireh

Before European explorers and settlers brought paper into the Southwest, Pueblo Indian artists painted their most elaborate images on pottery. Some of the first Pueblo painters to use paper adapted designs used on pottery to the flat surface of paper. The many designs in this painting resemble designs that were used to decorate pottery, though the artist, Awa Tsireh, also created fantastic beasts and creatures using a variety of traditional patterns and shapes.

QUESTIONS:

What animals do these designs remind you of? These designs really don't look like animals at all but we can still recognize them. What parts of the designs help to indicate specific creatures? For instance, what shapes do you need to indicate a face? Will two dots and a curving mouth be enough? How simple can something be and still be recognizable?

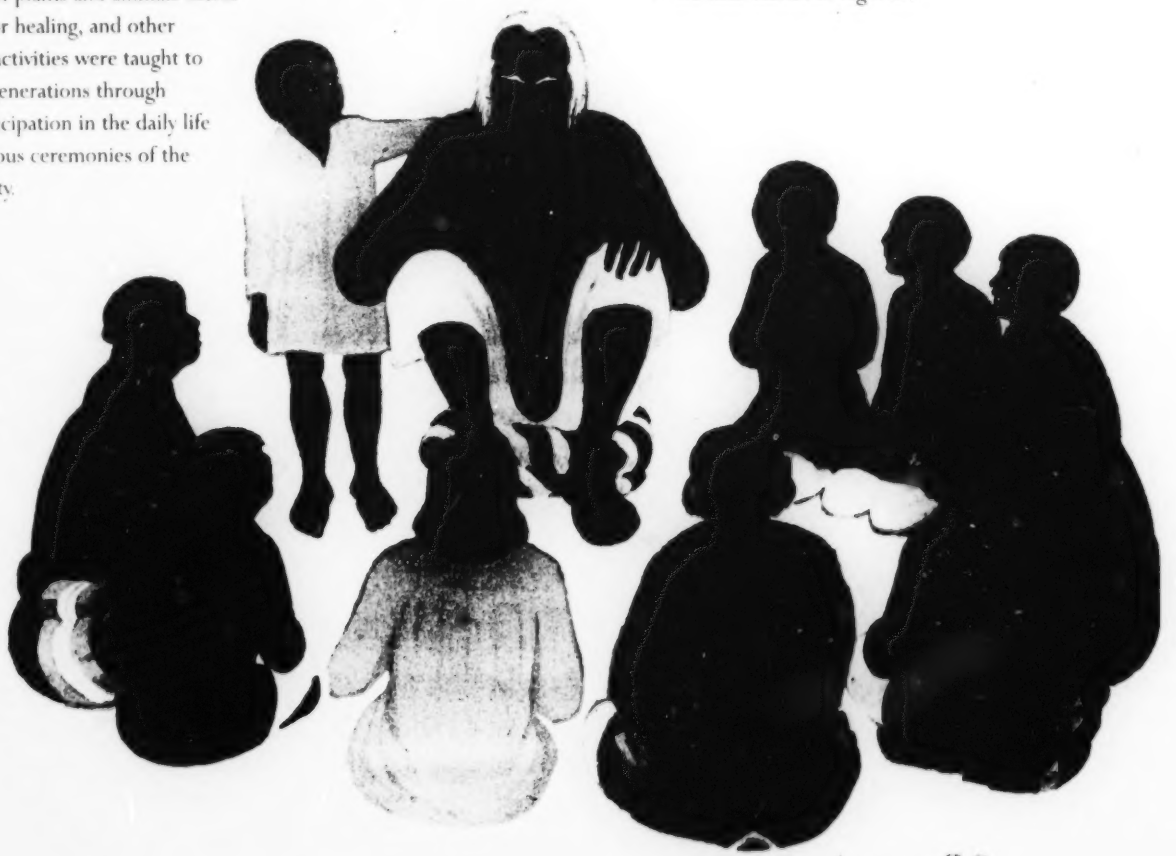
Story Teller

by Velino Shije Herrera

Among most Native American peoples, storytelling was traditionally the most important method of preserving, teaching, and passing on collective and individual knowledge. Because most Indian cultures did not have written languages before the arrival of Europeans, important information was kept in a people's collective memory and was passed on from generation to generation. In many communities, the older members worked hard to ensure that all the information they had memorized was in turn memorized by the young. Sometimes the information took the form of amusing and thought-provoking stories that were often used to entertain children. However, a great deal of important knowledge such as religious beliefs and practice, understanding of plants and animals useful for food or healing, and other practical activities were taught to younger generations through their participation in the daily life and religious ceremonies of the community.

QUESTIONS:

Do you have family stories that are told by your parents or grandparents? If so, where do you think those stories came from? Did someone make them up, or have they always been around? What have you learned by listening and what have you learned by doing? Is there a type of thing that is best learned by reading? How do you learn the lyrics to a favorite song? After hearing a song several times, the lyrics are easily memorized. This is also true when we hear stories or legends.

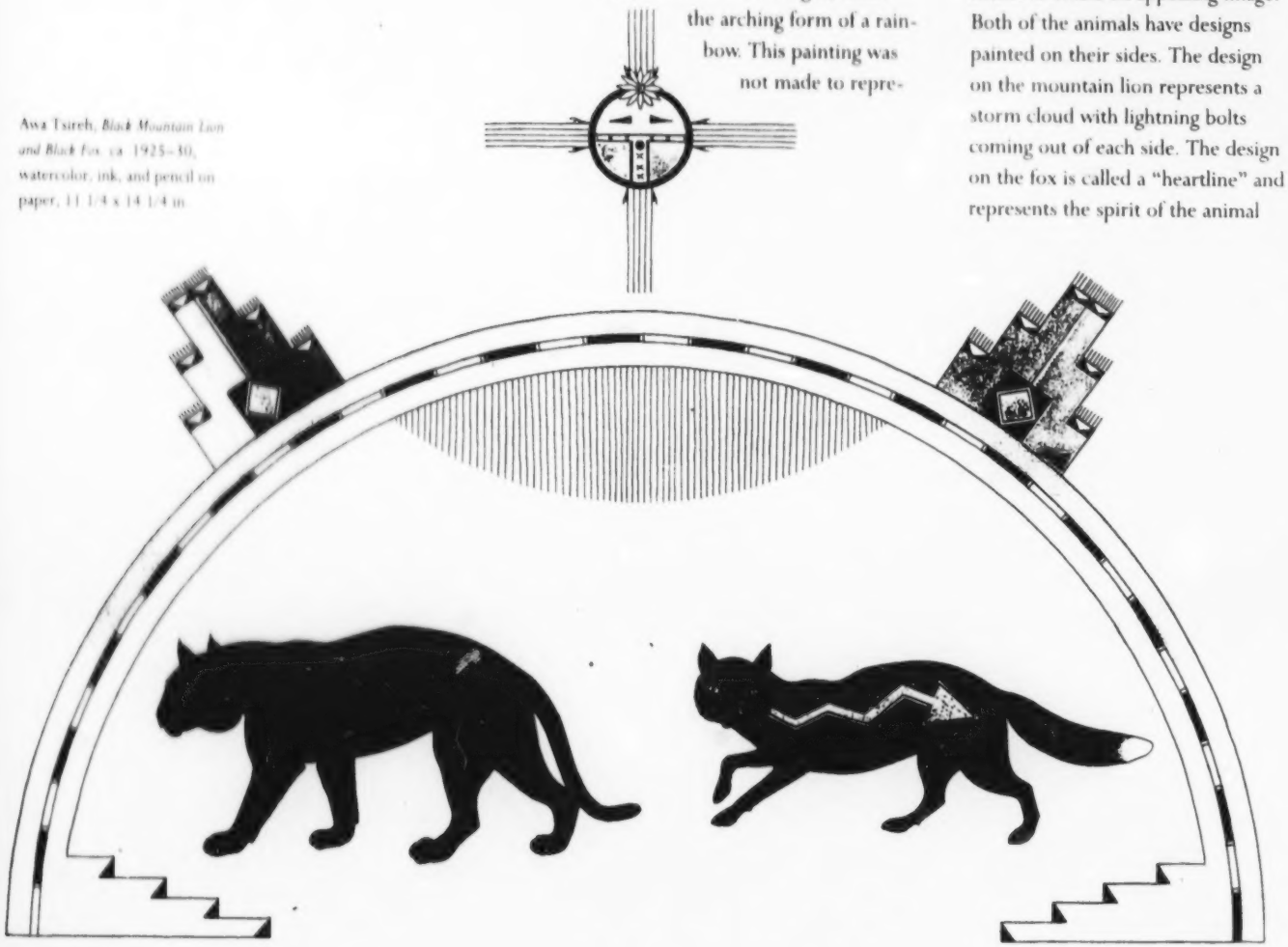


Velino Shije Herrera, *Story Teller*, ca. 1925–55, gouache and pencil on paperboard, 10 1/16 x 15 1/16 in.

Black Mountain Lion and Black Fox

by Awa Tsireh

The artist Awa Tsireh painted two local animals, a mountain lion on the left, and a fox on the right, under the arching form of a rainbow. This painting was not made to represent a specific event, instead it uses different shapes and decorative elements to create an appealing image. Both of the animals have designs painted on their sides. The design on the mountain lion represents a storm cloud with lightning bolts coming out of each side. The design on the fox is called a "heartline" and represents the spirit of the animal by showing the animal's breath moving from its mouth to its heart. At the base of either end of the rainbow, the stepped patterns represent distant mesas or mountains. Along the top of the rainbow are two stepped shapes indicating clouds and dropping from the middle of the rainbow are the fine lines of falling rain. Above the rainbow is the Zia or sun symbol with rays going out in the four directions sacred to Pueblo Indians. The sun symbol has an abstracted face made out of geometric shapes. This indicates that the sun is a living force of the natural world. This sun symbol is now the official symbol of the state of New Mexico.



Awa Tsireh, *Black Mountain Lion and Black Fox*, ca. 1925–30, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper, 11 1/4 x 14 1/4 in.

QUESTIONS:

Why do we use visual symbols? Wouldn't it be simpler just to use words? What symbols are used frequently? In what situations are symbols helpful?

Justino Herrera, *That is No Longer Our Smoke Sign*, ca. 1950s, watercolor and pencil on paperboard, 14 1/16 x 18 1/8 in.

That is No Longer Our Smoke Sign

by Justino Herrera

Justino Herrera served in the United States Army during World War II. Perhaps because of his experiences during the war, when he returned to New Mexico he painted this image about the explosion of a nuclear bomb. The painting depicts five people looking towards the United States Capitol behind which rises the mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion. The figures represent a Spanish Franciscan friar, symbolic of the Catholic missionaries sent from Spain to convert the Native American population to Christianity; a doctor, a male and a female Pueblo Indian, and an Anglo school teacher. The doctor and teacher represent the new science and new education that has been brought into the region since the arrival of the United States government in 1848. The building on the left is a mission church, and the building on the right is a school with the United States flag in front. The world's first atomic bomb was developed in the northern New Mexico town of Los Alamos. With irony, the artist titled the painting "That is No Longer Our Smoke Sign." The title may also refer to the stereotype of Indians sending messages using puffs of smoke even though Pueblo Indians did not traditionally communicate through smoke signals.

QUESTIONS:

The relationship between the United States government and Native American peoples has changed a great deal from the eighteenth century to the present. The federal government has played many roles including cultural missionary, educator, landlord, protector, strong-armed disciplinarian, health care provider, and in the minds of many — an oppressor. Over time Pueblo Indian peoples have been variously considered wards of the state, citizens of sovereign nations, and citizens of the United States of America who were only granted full voting rights in 1948. Why has the government's role towards Native Americans shifted over time? What symbols of government does the artist use in this painting? How has federal government policy toward Native Americans changed in the last twenty years? What impact have Indian rights groups had on federal policy in recent years?

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Buffalo Dance

by Thomas Vigil

This painting represents a religious ceremony. Many Pueblo religious ceremonies are called dances because rhythmic movement and singing to music constitute a large part of the public segment of the ceremony. Because the buffalo is associated with hunting and snow, the buffalo dance at many pueblos is held in winter. White down feathers are sometimes scattered throughout the dark hair of the buffalo headdress to symbolize fluffy snowflakes, and the dancers blacken their faces. The buffalo dancers are accompanied by a "Buffalo Mother." The men dancing as buffalo and the woman dancing as the game mother perform dance steps in imitation of the movement of buffalo. The dancers are accompanied by men drumming and singing. In this painting, the women hold feathers in their hands and the men hold an antelope antler and a rattle. The men also wear kilts painted with the symbol of the horned serpent, Avanyu.

Thomas Vigil, *Buffalo Dance, Six Dancers, Two Drummers*, ca. 1920–30, gouache and pencil on paper, 14 1/16 x 22 1/2 in.

Thomas Vigil, *Harvest Dance*, c.a. 1920–25, watercolor and pencil on paper, 14 1/16 x 12 11/16 in.

Harvest Dance

by Thomas Vigil

The large harvest dance is performed annually in many pueblos, usually in summer or early fall, to give thanks for the upcoming or recently completed harvest. Both men and women dance in equal numbers with a drummer and chorus of men singers. The dancers are led into the plaza by a man carrying a feather-topped woven banner on a tall pole. The male dancers wear white kilts, sashes around their waists, and tie tufts of parrot or macaw feathers in their hair. They hold evergreen branches in one hand and gourd rattles in the other. In some pueblos the men also paint their torsos and legs with black paint, and their waists and hands with white paint. The women wear woven dresses, or mantas, red sashes, and blue tablitas, or headdresses, made of thin wood boards. This dance is also called the "Corn Dance" or the "Tablita Dance" in some pueblos.

QUESTIONS:

(*Buffalo Dance* and *Harvest Dance* by Thomas Vigil)

What religious or traditional ceremonies do you take part in? What do ceremonies such as the Passover Seder, an Easter Egg Hunt, hanging Christmas lights, watching fireworks on the Fourth of July, or Halloween Trick-or-Treating mean? How would you explain them to someone who had never heard of them? If you drew them, what details would you have to include?

Other Dances

There are many dances that are performed by individuals from the different pueblos throughout the year. Not all Pueblo groups perform the same dances and ceremonies. There is also great variation in regalia and performance details between the different communities. The following four descriptions of ceremonies outline some of the most common features found throughout the pueblos.

Josefa Roybal, ca. 1930–39, *Comanche Dancers*, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper, 11 1/2 x 14 5/16 in.

Comanche Dance

The Comanche dance is a complex re-creation of the stereotypes of one tribal group by another. As primarily migratory cultures, the Comanche, Navajo, Apache, and Ute peoples traded with and occasionally raided the sedentary Pueblo peoples. To parody the feathers and fancy dress clothing of the Comanche and other Plains peoples, Pueblo male dancers dress in gaudy, brightly colored regalia, wear large feathered headdresses, and carry brightly colored standards. Occasionally the dancers, in imitation of Comanche warriors, let out loud yells and "war cries." The songs sung to accompany this dance include some words in the Comanche language—done more for effect than for accuracy. The dancers, musicians, and Pueblo spectators are interested more in the symbolic concept of the relationship between tribes than historical accuracy.

Awa Tsireh, *Eagle Dancers*, ca. 1917–25, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paperboard, 9 1/4 x 13 3/4 in.

Eagle Dance

The eagle dance is a remnant of a much more extensive ceremony to solicit rain to help the crops grow. Because of its ability to fly so high that it disappears from view, the eagle is seen as messenger between the earth and the clouds and sky by many Indian groups. The eagles are imitated by young men or boys who wear white caps with yellow beaks and bands of feathers running along each arm. The dancers imitate the many movements of eagles, creating stylized pivoting and flapping motions for soaring, diving, perching, resting, and mating.

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Shalako

The Shalako ceremony is performed in December and is one of the most important events in the Zuni religious calendar. Six men impersonate the Shalakos, deities or divine beings, by wearing wooden frames ten feet tall covered with dance kilts and topped with a mask of the face of Shalako. The Shalako impersonators dance throughout the night and visit specific houses in the Zuni pueblo. The next day they perform a ritual race during which they plant offering sticks in the ground to bring general health and fertility to the village, its crops, and livestock.

Awa Tsireh, *Zuni Shalako*, ca. 1925–30, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paperboard, 15 1/16 x 6 1/2 in.

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Oqwa Pi, *Hopi Snake Dancer*, ca. 1920–25, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paperboard, 11 1/4 x 14 5/16 in.

Snake Dance

The Hopi people who live in what is now northeastern Arizona are the only Pueblo group to perform a snake dance. Through sensationalized stories in popular magazines, the snake dance became one of the most widely known ceremonies of the Pueblo Indians. During one part of the dance, each dancer carries a live snake in his mouth. The snake is seen as a messenger to the underworld who can help assure abundant spring water and rainfall for the summer crops. The dancers wear red kilts painted with a black zig-zag pattern that represents the snake. Other patterns represent the footprints of ducks and frogs both of which are associated with water.

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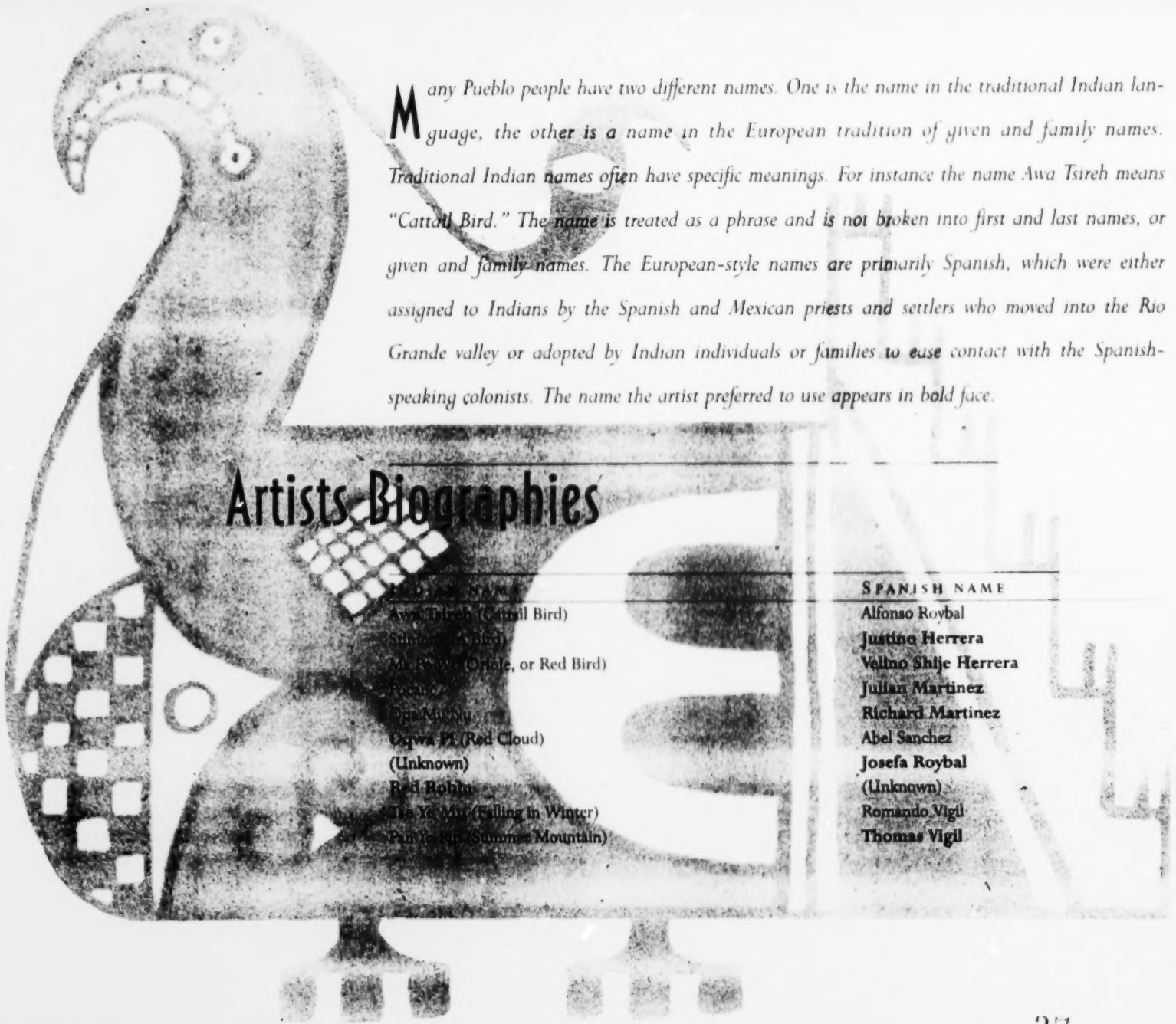

Many Pueblo people have two different names. One is the name in the traditional Indian language, the other is a name in the European tradition of given and family names. Traditional Indian names often have specific meanings. For instance the name Awa Tsireh means "Cattail Bird." The name is treated as a phrase and is not broken into first and last names, or given and family names. The European-style names are primarily Spanish, which were either assigned to Indians by the Spanish and Mexican priests and settlers who moved into the Rio Grande valley or adopted by Indian individuals or families to ease contact with the Spanish-speaking colonists. The name the artist preferred to use appears in bold face.

Artists Biographies

	SPANISH NAME
Awa Tsireh (Cattail Bird)	Alfonso Roybal
[illegible] (Bird)	**Justino Herrera**
[illegible] (Oriole, or Red Bird)	**Velino Shije Herrera**
[illegible]	**Julian Martinez**
[illegible]	**Richard Martinez**
Ogwa Pi (Red Cloud)	**Abel Sanchez**
(Unknown)	**Josefa Roybal**
Red Robin	**(Unknown)**
Tse Ye Mu (Falling in Winter)	**Romando Vigil**
Pan Yo Pin (Summer Mountain)	**Thomas Vigil**

Awa Tsireh (1895–1955)
San Ildefonso Pueblo

Awa Tsireh, also known as Alfonso Roybal, was one of the first Pueblo painters to receive recognition by the Santa Fe art community. After seeing several examples of Awa Tsireh's work for sale in a souvenir shop in 1917, Alice Corbin Henderson sought out the artist and through him developed a great respect for his work and that of his peers. Awa Tsireh's success at selling his paintings, although few were sold for more than a dollar, encouraged other Pueblo artists to adapt their painting and design skills to the medium of watercolor paint on paper. In the 1920s Awa Tsireh received sponsorship from the School of American Research, then a branch of the Museum of New Mexico, to devote his full time to painting. He was given studio space in the museum along with Fred Kabotie, a Hopi artist, and Velino Shije Herrera of Zia.

Justino Herrera (born 1920)
Cochiti Pueblo

Herrera began painting while at school in Santa Fe from 1937 to 1940. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and served for three years during World War II. Clearly the creation of the atomic bomb in the nearby town of Los Alamos had a lasting effect on Herrera as is indicated by his painting *That is No Longer Our Smoke Sign*. In the 1940s he wrote to a collector studying his work:

> *I figured a plan to do while I was in the army when I come [sic] home. I'd marry my sweetheart and have our own home on my farm, raise stock and I could keep painting, too. Well, it happened. We got married and we had a little girl. Couple months later my wife took sick...and she left me and my little baby daughter to raise. I am employed as a farmer here at St. Michael's Indian School.*

Velino Shije Herrera (1902–1973)
Zia Pueblo

Another Pueblo artist described Herrera, also known by his Indian name of Ma Pe Wi, as the "singing artist" because as he drew, Herrera would sing songs appropriate for the ceremony he was depicting. Herrera gave permission to the state of New Mexico to adapt his design of the Zia sun symbol for use as the state logo. The red design on a yellow field can be seen on the state flag, seal, and license plates. The artist received some criticism from other members of the Zia community for betraying his people by giving the traditional Pueblo design to non-Indians. With Awa Tsireh, Herrera painted under the sponsorship of the School of American Research and in the late 1930s, Herrera taught painting at the Albuquerque Indian School. In 1939 he was commissioned to create a series of murals for the Department of the Interior building in Washington, D.C. He spent much of his life as a rancher and cowboy.

JULIAN (1879–1943) AND MARIA MARTINEZ (1887–1980)

San Ildefonso Pueblo

Although Julian Martinez created many paintings on paper, he is best known for his collaborations with his wife, the potter Maria Martinez. Maria formed and polished the elegant vessels and Julian applied the painted decoration. Although they occasionally created vessels with colored designs, the couple gained an international reputation for their work with matte black decorations on polished black surfaces. In part, the national popularity of their pottery can be attributed to the ease with which the smooth, geometric shapes matched the art deco style of design of the 1930s and 1940s, or as Maria simply put it: "Black goes with everything." Julian painted the small Bowl, (see illustration, page 2), which was formed by Maria, with the Avanyu or horned serpent that also appears in his watercolor painting of *Avanyu*. (See illustration, page 3)

Julian Martinez, *Buffalo Hunter*, ca. 1920–25, watercolor, ink, and pencil on paperboard, 11 1/4 x 14 5/16 in.

Richard Martinez, *Mounted Warrior*, ca. 1920–30, watercolor and pencil on paper, 11 3/8 x 13 3/16 in.

RICHARD MARTINEZ (born 1904)

San Ildefonso Pueblo

Richard Martinez began to paint in 1920 and attended the Santa Fe Indian School where he took art classes with Dorothy Dunn. In 1936 he joined other artists who had attended the school in painting a series of murals for the school's student dining room.

OQWA PI (ca. 1899–1971)
San Ildefonso Pueblo

An active member of San Ildefonso's political and social life, Oqwa Pi served as both lieutenant governor, and governor of the pueblo. The figures in his paintings are highly stylized and the faces are made up of geometric designs. The artist once explained:

> *As I found that painting was the best among my talents, I decided to do my best to win me fame as an Indian artist. I have raised a big healthy family for my painting brought in good income.*

Red Robin, after 1935, *Landscape with Two Figures on Horseback*, watercolor and pencil on paper, 11 1/8 x 15 1/8 in.

RED ROBIN (born ca. 1918)
unknown affiliation, probably Zuni

Although little is known about this artist, at least for a time he lived in both Santa Fe and Taos. In the 1930s, he was employed by the Colorado Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration. He later moved to New York and became a textile designer. Unlike other Pueblo paintings, *Landscape with Two Figures on Horseback* represents the artist's interest in a looser approach to creating images.

Perhaps Red Robin was responding to the work of Anglo artists in Santa Fe and Taos who used watercolor in a very impressionistic style. The landscape and figures are indicated by broad strokes of watercolor without the sharply defined outlines that characterize most Pueblo watercolors.

Tse Ye Mu, *Deer Dancers*, ca. 1925–30, watercolor, gouache, and pencil on paper, 8 x 11 9/16 in.

Tse Ye Mu (1902–1972)
San Ildefonso Pueblo

Like several other Pueblo painters, Tse Ye Mu was included in the first major exhibition of American Indian art to be seen across the United States. The "Exhibition of Indian Tribal Arts," curated by the artist John Sloan, opened in New York in 1931 and contained six hundred works of art from twenty-one tribes. Tse Ye Mu received a commission to paint a mural for the opening of the exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 1933. The artist was also employed, probably as an animation artist, by the Walt Disney Studios in Hollywood, California, for a short period in the 1950s.

Josefa Roybal
(life dates unknown)
San Ildefonso Pueblo

One of the few female Pueblo painters in the first years of the movement, Josefa Roybal, the sister of Awa Tsireh, received little attention in an artistic community dominated by male artists. Like many Pueblo women, Josefa Roybal frequently used the Anglicized version of her name, Josephine, which would have been more familiar to non-Spanish speakers in the region. Currently there are many important Pueblo painters who are women.

Thomas Vigil (ca. 1889–1960)
Tesuque Pueblo

Although the pueblo of Tesuque is located only a few miles from the pueblo of San Ildefonso, Tesuque experienced little of the artistic renaissance of San Ildefonso. Painter Thomas Vigil began painting before 1920 and was one of the first painters from Tesuque Pueblo.

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Resources and Activities

Cultural Definitions

The definitions that follow refer to words used in this guide.

America: In the early sixteenth century, all of the land in the Western Hemisphere (including North, Central, and South America) was named after the little-known Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci who some thought was the first European to visit the continents of the Western Hemisphere. Although many people use the name "America" to mean the United States of America, the USA is only one of many countries in America.

Anglo: The first people to live in the Southwest of what is now the United States of America were members of different Indian cultures. The next group to arrive were Spanish explorers, soldiers, and settlers who came north from Mexico. Later, other explorers, soldiers, and settlers came from the United States in the eastern part of the continent. Because most of those who came from the eastern United States spoke English, they were called "Anglos" (a term that refers to the Anglo-Saxon roots of the English people) by the Hispanic and Indian peoples already there. Even though Caucasian people are not necessarily of English descent, the term "Anglo" continues to be used in the area to identify non-Hispanics and non-Indians.

Hispanic: The historical name for the Iberian peninsula where Spain is located is "Hispania." Like many European nations, Spain established colonies on the African, Asian, and American continents. Although they did not live in Spain, many colonists around the globe referred to themselves as Spanish to differentiate themselves from indigenous peoples who lived in areas before the colonial conquests. In the American Southwest, people of Spanish heritage or descent refer to themselves, and are referred to by others as "Hispanic" or "Hispano." Others, who wish to make a connection with their Mexican heritage refer to themselves as "Chicano" or sometimes "Mexican-American." The term "Latino" is also used in the United States to refer to persons of Latin American heritage.

Indian: Christopher Columbus coined the term "Indian" to identify the native peoples of the Americas in 1492 when he mistakenly thought he had landed in India instead of the Caribbean. The word "Indian," which many people believe is inappropriate has been used for so many years that many native people continue to use it instead of the term "Native American." Both terms are used interchangeably throughout this guide.

Native American: "Native American" is a term often used in place of the more common word "Indian" to indicate the indigenous people who live in the Americas. Native Americans, whose ancestors crossed from Asia to North America more than twenty thousand years ago, were settled throughout North, Central, and South America at the time the Europeans first arrived in the Western Hemisphere.

Glossary

Heartline: A heartline is a decorative motif originating in the mid-nineteenth century in the American Southwest. Frequently animal figures on pottery and stone carvings are depicted with a line from the mouth to the chest, terminating in an arrowhead at the location of the heart. This heartline represents the spirit or life of the animal.

Kachina: A supernatural being important in the religion of the Hopi and Zuni. The kachina gods can be represented in physical form through small wooden carvings, often called "kachina dolls," and for ceremonial purposes by men dressed wearing masks and regalia appropriate for specific kachinas.

Kiva: A chamber or room built for the meetings of a religious group, clan or society. These rooms, which are sometimes underground, are used by members as a meeting room where they come together to talk, work, and conduct religious ceremonies. Many of the nonpublic religious ceremonies of Pueblo peoples are held in kivas.

Maize: Maize, an Indian word for corn, is the most important food in Pueblo life. The ancestors of the Pueblo peoples were hunters and gatherers. During the third millennium B.C. the hunter/gatherer ancestors of modern Pueblo Indians added domesticated corn to their diet allowing the formerly nomadic peoples to establish farming communities along the Rio Grande and other fertile areas in the Southwest.

Mesa: A mesa is a flat-topped mountain or hill common throughout the Southwest. Spanish explorers called these geographic features "mesas," which means "table" in Spanish, because they resemble tables with smooth, flat tops, and sides that drop away steeply.

Mission: A mission is a church and religious center originally established with the purpose of changing the religious beliefs of others. The first missions in the American Southwest were churches built by Spanish priests and Franciscan friars. Often located in the middle of pre-existing Pueblo communities, their intention was to convert Indians to Christianity.

Tablita: A thin board with painted and cutout patterns worn by female Pueblo dancers. Designs that are most common are clouds, butterflies, sprouting corn, rain, stars and the moon. The bright, multicolored designs are sharply contrasted. Black is frequently used to outline the separate shapes and to accent the divisions of various patterns.

Yucca: Sometimes called "Spanish bayonet," yucca is a low growing desert shrub. It is also called "soapweed" because yucca roots produce a good lather for washing. The plant is indispensable to the Pueblo peoples because its sharp pointed leaves can be used as needles, the ends can be flattened to make paint brushes, and the leaf fibers are also twisted into thread and cord. The regalia of certain Hopi and Zuni kachinas have skirts made of stiff yucca leaves.

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Symbols

Symbols are visual clues that indicate or represent something. In order for symbols to be useful to a group of people, each person must know what each symbol represents. For instance the shape of a heart can be used to represent love; the "peace sign" has come to represent the complex idea of peace. Nothing about the shapes of either of these symbols makes their meaning obvious; people have simply developed an informal agreement about their meaning. Symbols can also be based on a simplified visual representation of an object such as the silhouette of a wheelchair that is used to indicate access for persons who can't use stairs. ❖ For the Pueblo Indians colors have come to symbolically represent directions. For instance, for the Hopi, yellow represents north, white represents east, red represents south, blue represents west, and black represents "above." For centuries, the Hopi have grown maize in each of these colors.

Key to symbols used throughout this book:

1. cloud with rain and lightning
2. cloud with leaves and lightning
3. cloud with rain and lightning
4. cloud with rain and lightning
5. sun (Zia)
6. forehead of the sun (setting sun)
7. forehead of the sun (rising sun)
8. dragonflies
9. plumed or horned serpent "Avanyu"
10. mountains
11. tadpoles
12. mountain
13. mountain under rainbow
14. bear
15. corn
16. heartline on a fox
17. corn plant

Suggested Activities:

Activities focus upon research, writing, and oral presentation. Use the materials in this guide as points of departure. Libraries and local historical societies often include special sections of materials about American Indians. Also many states have an office or council of Indian affairs that can direct students to local tribal organizations in their area, or write to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240 for addresses of local tribal groups.

Find out which American Indian tribes live in your region. Include information on the tribe's history and culture. Address topics like these:

Are Indian names used for the cities and rivers where you live?

What is the tribe's language? What are their traditions?

Are there artists in the tribe? If so, describe what they make. Do they paint, carve wood, form clay, make decorative clothing or jewelry?

What influences have outside cultures had on the Native American tribes if any? Describe the interaction that took place. Does that continue today?

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Indian reservations were created by the federal government in various parts of the United States. Why do you think the government established reservations for American Indians? What was the government attempting to do? Think of both positives and negatives in your response.

If there are reservations in your area, when were they established? Are they still in existence?

What is the role of the United States government in providing education and health to the reservations? Research the special programs.

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